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ABSTRACT

Increasing consideration is being given in the the United States to moving away from corporal punishment as a discipline alternative. Therefore, it is important to look at the experiences of countries such as Norway that have abolished corporal punishment. In this study, questionnaires regarding classroom management techniques were completed by 286 primary level teachers from 63 rural and urban schools in Norway. Almost all students were middle class and Norwegian-speaking. Praise, providing an enjoyable activity, and giving extra recess were the most frequently used reward techniques. Verbal reprimands were the most frequently used negative reinforcement. Other frequently used management techniques were moving the disturbing pupil away from the distracting stimulus, making eye contact, and making physical contact by placing a hand on the pupil's shoulder or arm. Techniques spontaneously suggested by teachers focused on listening, discussing, and communicating expectations. Teachers also indicated good working relationships with parents. Many behavior modification and punishment techniques used in the United States were either not used at all or used by very few. While Norwegian teachers indicated interest in learning more about classroom management techniques, it was concluded from 12 months of observation that this interest was not due to inadequate classroom management. It was suggested that more frequent recesses may help to reduce discipline problems. (CB)

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Classroom Management and Discipline, Without Corporal Punishment, In Norwegian Elementary Schools

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Introduction

One of the oldest education concerns passed on decade after decade to new aspiring problem solvers is that of classroom discipline (Falk, 1941; Hyman, 1979). One of the oldest methods associated with controlling undesireable behavior in the classroom has been the use, or threat of, corporal punishment (Barba, 1980; Foster, 1977; Hew, 1977). Corporal punishment can be defined as the infliction of pain upon a person by use of a hand or an instrument, such as a paddle, by someone in authority. Over the decades most countries, including communist block countries, have abolished corporal punishment on the premise that it is unhumane, has a negative influence on learning and serves no educational purpose nor has any rational justification. The harmful effects of corporal punishment in the school have been well documented (Wallerstein and Maurer, 1983; Friedman, 1976; Gilmartin, 1979). It has been shown to: increase vandalism (Hardy and Miller, 1981; Maurer, 1973; Wallerstein, 1983); stimulate violence, aggression and bullying (Welsh, 1978; Sadoff, 1979), crime and delinquency (Maurer, 1980; Cal. State Comm. on Crime Control, 1981), emotional disorders (Johnson, 1980) and sexual abnormalities (British Psych. Society, 1980; Gibson, 1978); endanger health, with the potential to cause permanent physical damage (Wessel, 1980; Society for Adoles. Med., 1980; Ohio Medical Assoc., 1983).

Presently only a few developed countries still condone corporal punishment in education: Australia, New Zealand, South Africa, England and the United States. In 1977 the U.S. Supreme Court (Ingrham vs. Wright) voted 5-4 to affirm the authority of states to permit and regulate corporal punishment in public schools (Piele, 1979). From its inception this court's ruling has come under attack and has been the main topic of controversy in education (HEW, 1977).

A hearing on this issue took place in Washington as recently as October. Seven states (Vermont, New Hampshire, Rhode Island, Maine, Hawaii, New Jersey and Massachusetts) have, to date, elected to abolish corporal punishment in their schools, with counties, cities and municipalities in other states taking a like stand. With increasing consideration being given to moving away from corporal punishment as a discipline alternative in our school systems across American it is important to look at countries that have abolished corporal punishment. How successful have their programs been? What techniques do teachers use to manage classrooms and instill discipline? Are teachers satisfied? Would they revert to corporal punishment if it were allowed? These questions and others were asked of teachers in Norway, a country greatly influenced by America but one that banned corporal punishment from its schools in 1936.

Procedures/Subjects and Environment

A questionnaire on "Classroom Management and Discipline Techniques" was translated into the Norwegian language and distributed to 600 elementary school teachers in six Norwegian cities of varying population (figure 1).

Figure 1

City	Pop.	Quest. Sent	Teachers Partic.
Oslo	500,000	150	90
Bergen	230,000	150	52
Alesund	40,000	100	37
Molde	20,000	100	44
Ørsta	8,000	50	37
Volda	7,000	50	26
	TOTAL	600	286 (48%)

63 schools participated with 286 teachers responding. All respondants remained anonymous with distribution and retrieval of questionnaires provided by central administration offices. Enrollment of pupils ranged from 25 in schools in the 2 "cities" with the smallest population, to between 200-500 pupils in schools in the 4 largest populated cities. Because of relative isolation of many communities under a city's area administration, schools in out-of-the way areas have been established to accommodate small numbers of families. The objective is to keep communities located in these areas who otherwise might abandon the region for another that has education advantages for their children. Although this is an expensive program to maintain, Norway, under a socialist government and well-off economically, strives to provide equity in quality educational service to all children no matter where they reside.

The Norwegian are a very homogeneous group by social, economic and ethnic standards. Even with a vast rural population only three teachers considered their students to be less than middle class and only seven teachers acknowledged the presence of pupils who were not Norwegian speaking (two of these teachers were teachers of the author's two children). Less than 5% of the teachers considered their pupils to be below middle-class socioeconomic standards.

Teachers participating were on the faculties of the "barneskolen" (children's school), a primary level of education that consisted of first grade through sixth grade. Children are 7 years old when they enter the first grade, one year older than American children at the same entry level. The average school day was 5½ hours with a total of 1 to 1½ hours of recess

included. A short 15 minute recess between class subjects was common.

The teacher education process consisted of a three-year terminal degree program at one of the regional teacher training colleges. Further "formal" training was obtained through special regional workshops/seminars, when available.

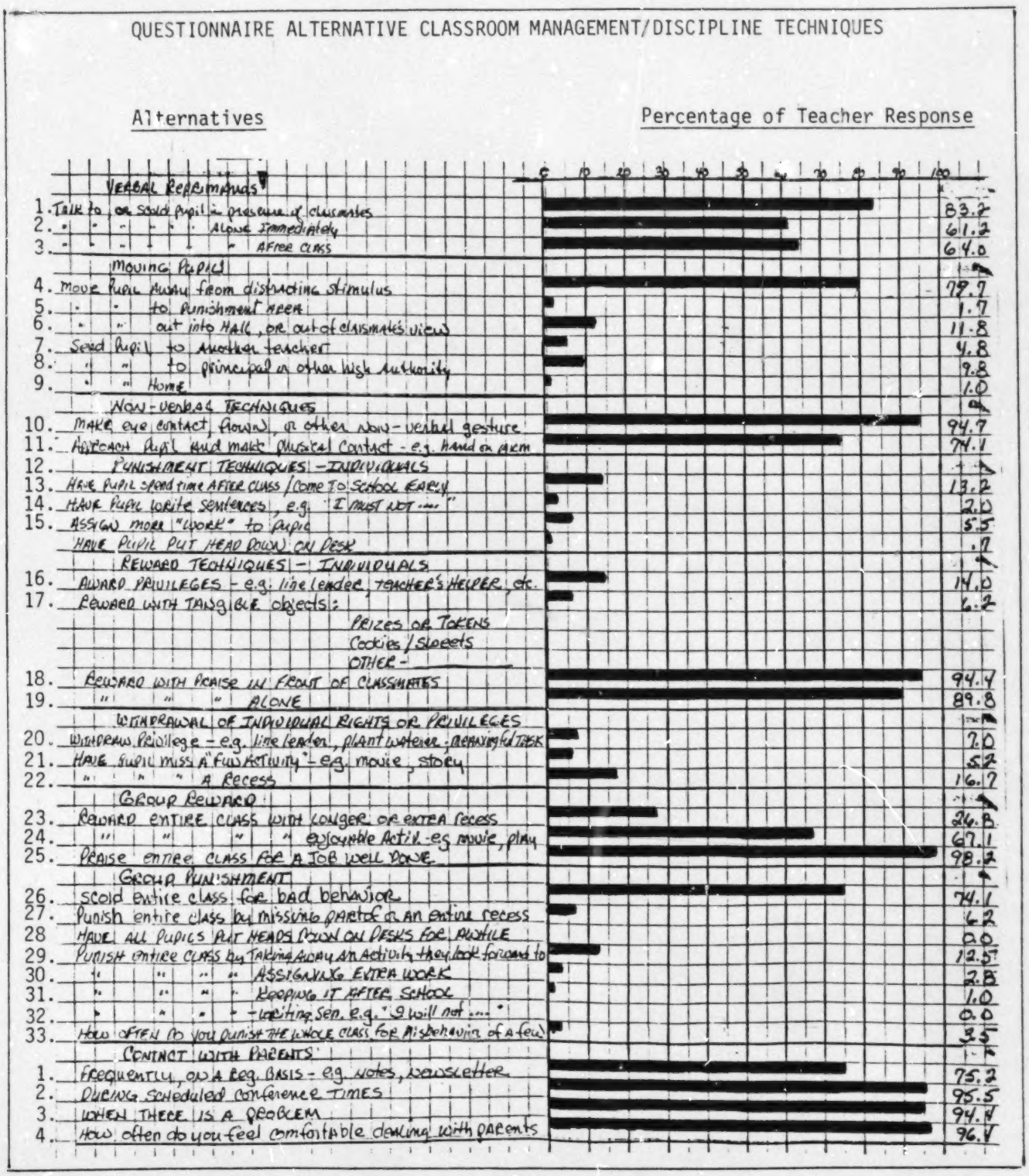
Results/Discussion

Generally there were a limited number of alternative management/discipline techniques on the questionnaire that were used to any extent. These techniques appeared to be either used (responses greater than 62%) or not used (responses less than 15%). Figure 2 gives a profile of teacher responses to those questions pertaining to categories of classroom management/discipline techniques. The following discusses this data. Unless indicated the data figure given represents a consistency of response across all six cities sampled.

Of the 33 techniques teachers were asked to respond to, 11 responses were predominant. "Praise" was extremely popular, used either as an individual, isolated reward (89,8), in the presence of classmates (94.4) or as a reward for the class as a group (98.2). The only other highly used reward was that of "providing an enjoyable activity," such as a movie, play etc. (67.1). "Recess," an almost extinct specie in the U.S., was used by about one-forth of the teachers as a reward. Recess as a reward was used twice as much by teachers in the four smaller cities. Although the number of teachers who use this method for classroom management is low it may not reflect the true potential of this alternative since Norwegian children already have numerous recess periods throughout the day. With 1 to 1½ hours of accumulated recess time each day, added recess time as a reward for good behavior may not be anything special and thus, may not

FIGURE 2

QUESTIONNAIRE ALTERNATIVE CLASSROOM MANAGEMENT/DISCIPLINE TECHNIQUES


Alternatives
Percentage of Teacher Response
0 10 20 30 40 50 60 70 80 90 100
VERBAL REPRIMANDS
1. Talk to, or scold pupil - presence of classmates 83.7
2. " " " " Alone Immediately 61.2
3. " " " " After Class 64.0
MOVING PUPILS
4. Move Pupil Away from distracting stimulus 78.7
5. " " to Punishment Area 1.7
6. " " out into Hall, or out of classmates view 11.8
7. Send Pupil to another teacher 4.8
8. " " to principal or other high authority 9.8
9. " " Home 1.0
NON-VERBAL TECHNIQUES
10. Make eye contact, frown, or other non-verbal gesture 94.7
11. Approach Pupil and make physical contact - e.g. hand on Arm 74.1
12. PUNISHMENT TECHNIQUES - INDIVIDUALS
13. Have Pupil spend time After Class / come to School Early 13.2
14. Have Pupil write sentences, e.g. "I must not ...." 2.0
15. Assign more "work" to pupil 5.5
Have Pupil put head down on desk .7
REWARD TECHNIQUES - INDIVIDUALS
16. Award Privileges - e.g. line leader, teacher's helper, etc. 14.0
17. Reward with tangible objects: 6.2
Prizes or Tokens
Cookies / Sweets
Other -
18. Reward with Praise in front of classmates 94.4
19. " " " Alone 89.8
WITHDRAWAL OF INDIVIDUAL RIGHTS OR PRIVILEGES
20. Withdraw Privilege - e.g. line leader, plant waterer, Reading Time 7.0
21. Have Pupil miss a "fun activity" - e.g. movie, story 5.2
22. " " " A Recess 16.7
GROUP REWARD
23. Reward entire class with longer or extra recess 26.8
24. " " " " enjoyable Activ. - eg movie, play 67.1
25. Praise entire class for a job well done 98.2
GROUP PUNISHMENT
26. Scold entire class for bad behavior 74.1
27. Punish entire class by missing part of or an entire recess 6.2
28 Have all pupils put heads down on desks for awhile 0.0
29. Punish entire class by Taking Away an Activity they look forward to 12.5
30. " " " " Assigning Extra Work 2.8
31. " " " " Keeping it After School 1.0
32. " " " " - Writing Sen. e.g. "I will not ...." 0.0
33. How often do you punish the whole class for misbehavior of a few 3.5
CONTACT WITH PARENTS
1. Frequently, on a Reg. Basis - e.g. notes, newsletter 75.2
2. During Scheduled Conference Times 95.5
3. When there is a problem 94.4
4. How often do you feel comfortable dealing with parents 96.4

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have a reinforcing impact. On the other hand, though, recess could easily be used by all teachers as a withdrawn privilege to control undesirable behavior with both group and individual. Only 16.7% of the teachers used this method. In fact, as the data indicates, there is very little attention given to any "withdrawal of privileges."

Non-positive reinforcing management techniques used were also somewhat limited. "Verbal reprimands" in the form of "scolding pupils," either individually or as a group, were used by the majority of teachers. Three-fourths of the teachers use scolding of the group as a technique, while an even greater number (83%) scold a misbehaving pupil in front of peers. About two-thirds of the teachers "take the pupil aside" to reprimand and wait until "after class" to reprimand.

Only three other management techniques listed provided a significant response. "Moving the disturbing pupil away from the problem area of distracting stimulus" was practiced by almost 80% of the teachers. Non-verbal techniques such as "making eye contact" or "frowning" (94.7%) and "making physical contact" by placing a hand on the pupils shoulder or arm to acknowledge teacher presence and awareness of the situation (74.1%) were also popular.

As can be seen in Figure 2 many techniques associated with management/discipline systems used in the U.S. were either not used at all or by very few. Some of the low response to certain techniques can be associated with subjects classifying a technique as "unknown." Up to 10% of the subjects indicated that they were not knowing of each of the following low used (under 20%) categories: "Moving pupils from view of classmates," "sending to another teacher, principal or home," "assigning more work," "staying after

school," and "missing a 'fun' activity or recess." Although teachers in a given social system may not approve of certain management/discipline techniques it would be assumeable that they have at least heard of them. A higher percentage of subjects indicated as "unknown" those techniques we would associate with time-out (17.5%), writing "I must not..." sentences (14% for individuals; 16.1% for group punishment), and "token reward" systems (12.9%). Having pupils "put their heads down on their desk/table" was really mind-boggeling to our Norwegian colleagues. Almost one-half of the teachers had never heard of this technique. This questionnaire technique provided such voluntary margin comments as "you have got to be kidding," "ridiculous," "this must be a joke," and "what purpose could this possibly serve." Could this be an American invention?

These data indicate that few alternative responses to classroom management/disciplinary needs were acknowledged. It does not suggest, however, that the accent on praise as a reinforcer to increase positive behavior and verbal reprimands as the governing method for dealing with undesireable behavior is all that is needed to satisfy teacher needs and level of control. Corporal punishment, although abolished, lingers in the minds of almost 10% of the teachers as an effective means of controlling pupil behavior. This may reflect a number of possibilities associated with their training. First, only one-third of the teachers indicated that they learned some techniques in their three-year teacher training program. Second, while one-third of the teachers indicated the availability of "in-service" sessions only one-fourth of the teachers actually participated in them. Third, the most dominating force for learning classroom management/discipline techniques was "practical experience," with 90% responding. Over, three-fourth of the teachers indicated a need for

more training in this area.

The request for additional training in classroom management/discipline techniques was evenly distributed between all six cities. It was anticipated that the larger cities, with larger physical plants and class size would have a greater need for additional techniques than the small cities with the increased possibility and probability of closer community/parent contact.

While Norwegian teachers did not practice many of the management systems known to American teachers, 26% did respond when asked to "provide any classroom management/discipline techniques not mentioned (in the questionnaire) that you use, have found to be successful and could recommend to others." Comments have been listed in summary under the following categories:

1. Discussion/Conference

- talk openly about problem; solve problem together
- find solution that is acceptable to everyone
- realize that a case has two sides; express both party's feelings openly (Teacher vs pupil(s))
- discuss what is appropriate and inappropriate behavior; take the time to discuss problems: use preventative measures
- give children more responsibility in deciding on solutions to problems; let them decide punishment
- always listen to what individuals or class/group has to say... both adult and child are both teacher and student
- have individual conferences and clearly state teacher's position to pupil; ask pupil for suggestions/remedies for problem
- stimulate good behavior in a "natural" way

2. Teacher Attitudes

- make pupils feel safe, secure in classroom
- provide success
- a good relationship = being friendly but firm
- praise and constructive criticism work better than punishment
- clear rules with common sense
- strict routines and good work habits from the 1st day
- role play problem situations; have pupils get a feel for each other's feelings
- give all the feeling of progress - that they can all be successful at something
- make students responsible for the general well-being of the class

- teach child how to work in beginning so he can self-manage and plan as the year progresses
- make an atmosphere of cooperation
- pupils who have interesting, individual and motivating work are seldom discipline problems and they learn to take responsibility for their own work
- trust = positive results
- respect = responsibility and good behavior
- let pupils know that you [teacher] sometimes have problems too - win trust and understanding
- let pupils know you love them; show them that you care about them as people
- be understanding and fair
- add variety to your teaching; admit some may be of a boring nature but try to make it interesting

3. Teacher Techniques

- many and long conversations with pupils and their parents; home visits may have very positive effects
- be well prepared for all lessons
- wait until the students are silent to start a lesson
- rules should be very thoroughly examined, discussed and repeated when needed
- important that students are clearly told the consequences of their behavior - teacher feedback must be immediate
- set clear boundries; be consistant and fair
- use reward/punishment when the whole class has shown good or bad behavior

4. Miscellaneous

- never use sarcasm; be aware of pupils' personal life
- try to break up the traditional patterns of teaching - e.g. take related field trips
- smaller class size would help cope with many problems that can not be handled with large teacher/pupil ratio
- do activities with students in spare time
- break routine - e.g. allow the children some play time when they get too tired; a break in regular subject matter can use energy and then relax and better concentrate
- it is more successful to keep the same teacher with a class from grade 1 through grade 6. This helps create a better relationship, understanding and consistency between teacher, child and parents. Most disciplinary problems can be quickly solved then.

These added comments provide some interesting insight into the Norwegian teacher's relationship with their pupils and a focus of classroom management

style not reflected in the questionnaire. A humanistic approach is quite evident. Remarks concerning listening, discussing and communicating of expectations are techniques consistently suggested. These remarks may be able to diminish or counterbalance the Norwegian teacher's need for exercising many of the low response techniques of the questionnaire.

Finally, in keeping with an emphasis on communication, teachers appear to have a very good working relationship with parents. Almost all teachers (96.4%) feel comfortable dealing with parents and contact them when there is a problem (94.4). More systematic contact is made with parents through scheduled conference times (95.5) and via personal notes and school or class newsletters (75.2). In general the larger the city the greater the use of notes and newsletters as a form of communication, which may reflect the greater availability and convenience of personal contact between teacher and parent in lower populated areas.

Summary and Concluding Remarks

At first glance it would appear that Norwegian Elementary School teachers have a limited repertoire of alternatives that they use in their classrooms to deal with management/discipline situations. Not only were many of the alternatives listed on the questionnaire used by very few teachers, one out of ten teachers marked they had never heard of the alternative before.

This would, then, bring up a question concerning their training. Teachers indicated insufficient classroom management/discipline technique content in their teacher training program, low in-service availability with even lower involvement and a very high percentage of learning alternative techniques through on-the-job trial-and-error experiences. This information provides

little surprise that three-quarter of the teachers want more training in the area of classroom management and discipline. Taken collectively, this data would lead one to assume that the Norwegian teacher feels inadequate concerning classroom management/discipline techniques and is looking for some direction. This, however, may be an erroneous assumption.

A closer look at the additional comments written by the respondents, provides the reader with some interesting insight into the Norwegian teachers' style of working with children that had not been dealt with in the questionnaire. Approximately, one-quarter of the teachers stated other techniques used in their classroom to manage/discipline children, and they all provided suggestions and techniques that had a "humanistic" quality. Communicating through listening and discussing was the central theme. The child's feelings, security, and self-esteem were stressed, along with fairness, understanding, consistency and caring on the part of the teacher.

From personal observation, over a 12 month period, Norwegian teachers appear to be more relaxed and not as anxious over the daily need for academic attainment as is found in the United States. Children are allowed to be children and to experience all the facets of a curriculum that to us is becoming a fading memory. Full and frequent periods of arts and crafts, shop, physical education and music, prevalent and valued in Norwegian education, have been abandoned or have diminished to a token offering in the U.S.. Likewise, our lunch "hour," once a time for personal relaxation and social interaction, has been relegated to the archives, with regular "recess" breaks headed in the same direction. Norwegian teachers focus their education curriculum on the "Whole Child" and allow a wide variety of experiences within the school setting.

Could it be that Norwegian teachers don't need all the Behavior Modification techniques and punishment methodolgy that are so much a part of American teachers' repertoire and that had been listed on the questionnaire; that their request for more training is only a request for more knowledge, and not a mandate for survival? Could something as simple as periodic recesses on the playground, for example, be one answer for reducing discipline problems in the classroom? Norwegian teachers, interviewed for another study (Jambor, 1984), felt that after each recess children were more relaxed, content and ready to resume their academic work. The children had a chance to be physical, to work out conflicts and to engage in social/peer relationships. Teachers suggested that the "recess" reduced negative interplay and mental fatique within the classroom, and that the children concentrated on their studies more. Teachers also felt more refreshed and ready to continue after recess breaks. Thus, benefits for both teacher and pupil and an implied reduced need for disciplinary action and use of associated techniques.

One last comment. A suggestion by a 3rd grade teacher that sums-up classroom management Norwegian style:

> "If you get angry or disappointed, don't get grumpy - have a song instead - and then we're friends again.
> Try to remember they are small, and kids are kids! Try to have some fun sometimes."

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